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The Song of Life and Other Poems

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THE SONG OF LIFE
AND OTHER POEMS

The
Song of Life
And Other Poems

By
Dombey



Boston
The Stratford Co., *Publishers*
1920

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The STRATFORD CO., Publishers
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To Marshall Livingston Herrin

WHOSE EXAMPLE AND TEACHINGS HAVE BEEN FOR
YEARS MY CONSTANT GUIDE AND INSPIRATION, THIS
LITTLE VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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THE SONG OF LIFE



The Song of Life

JOY surges high when life is at its spring,
Wild as the rushing of some mountain
stream,

That bursting forth, o'erleaping every barrier,
From dizzy precipice to threatening shoal
Plunges unscathed in carefree merriment.
Life seems a great adventure to the soul
But newly come from dreamland, that forgets
What it has been, all it has known before,
And madly revelling, defying pain,
For every pleasure grasps with greedy hand.

Then when the years advance and hair is gray,
After the bitter tragedies have come,
If in the soul mirth lingers, and all day
A merry song rings clear within the breast —
The potent urge of universal Love
Taps all life's pent-up sources, till at last
Out of youth's heedless joy pure rapture springs,
Swelling forever towards the Eternal Sea;
An echo of that infinite Song of Life,
Whose wellspring is celestial harmony.

THE SONG OF LIFE

The Song of Life Is Hushed

THE Song of Life is hushed:
There comes a pause
As the soul speeds
To its much needed rest
In dreamless night.
Oh, let no sound of grief
Disturb that sleep,
And thus bring discord
Into that pure Song,
When the soul awakens
To the fuller light.

THE SONG OF LIFE

The Song of Life

WHEN by a potent thought the Almighty
God

Brought Kosmos out of chaos, and one turn
Of that relentless wheel, His perfect Law,
Set stars and planets rolling on their course
In boundless space, the Song of Life began.
And through the countless eons that elapsed,
While painfully and slowly did evolve
From merest atom all the myriad forms
Of growing life, that ever held concealed
A spark divine, that Song did yet persist.
And e'en to-day, — after long centuries
Of strife and toil, and progress oft so slow
It seemed at times a retrogression, — still,
Above the transient discords of the world,
That Song doth ring in perfect harmony.
And when within the stillness of our heart,
Silenced the outer world, we feel the rhythm
That unifies all life, it then may be,
That in that rhythm we shall catch the strain

THE SONG OF LIFE

Of the Celestial Music of the Spheres,
And know at last that what we thought a cry
Was after all—a Song.

AFTER DEATH IN BATTLE



After Death in Battle

A lifeless body lies blood-stained upon the ground. The spirit looks up dazed and beholds another spirit bending over him.

THE FORMER

WHO art thou? Dost thou think to see
in me
Some old, familiar friend,
That thou dost gaze upon my prostrate form?
I've reached the end.

THE LATTER

I am the shade of him thou slewest in June,
Close by the river, just as the full moon,
Piercing the clouds, revealed my form amid
The too scant reeds. Hast thou forgot? I did
Not think thou couldst so soon forget the deed.
I killed but one man ere earth's final dole
Fell to my lot; but I still see his face
Looking in mine with eyes that burn my soul.

THE SONG OF LIFE

THE FORMER

Alas! So many has my bayonet thrust
To instant or to lingering death, I must
Confess I have no memory, save of one
Great, bleeding, groaning mass.
But wherefore, prithee, camest thou to do
A loving service to thine enemy?

THE LATTER

Long have I waited for thee, for I knew
Thou couldst not of thyself find out the way
That leads to rest. I know it now at last;
So if thou wilt but follow, till thou canst
Unveil the flame that dimly burns within,
Let my lamp light thy path.

THE FORMER

(starting as one terrified)

Tell me, where am I? Everything seems strange
And yet familiar. Oh! the blood! the blood!
Help! 'Tis my life blood ebbs.

THE LATTER

Nay, friend, 'tis but the picture of the past;
You do not bleed.

AFTER DEATH IN BATTLE

The Former faints. The other surveys him with tender sympathy.

THE FORMER

(regaining consciousness, faintly)

Go, leave me; there are those more worthy far.
I must go back; I know such love too late!
Behold that timid soul that comes but now —

(Again he faints)

THE LATTER

(standing in an attitude of quiet compassion)

Nay, nay, thy need is greatest. I shall wait.



LOVE LYRICS



Love Lyrics

DOST thou remember, love, that wondrous
moment
When for the first time we stood soul to soul?
Heart spoke to heart, although no word was
uttered,
As all around we heard the billows roll.

A myriad burning suns blazed in the heavens,
A myriad quivered on the darkened sea,
But dimly conscious of their radiant presence
We only felt: "At last I am with thee!"

THE SONG OF LIFE

I never lived, Beloved, till the day
I knew thee for my own;
Now I can never cease to live, Beloved,
Once having known.

* * * *

My soul is hungry, thirsty, languishing,
O come to me!
Or if imprisoned, send thy soul
Across the sea!

* * * *

O my Beloved, art thou still so lonely?
My spirit is with thee, where'er thou art;
And evermore though oceans wide divide us,
Thou hast my heart!

LOVE LYRICS

Beloved of my heart, how can I tell thee
The longing of my soul to reach to thine?
Thou soarest in thy radiance far above me,
I cannot come, too slender strength is mine.

Do not descend and leave that glorious summit,
I love to see thee scale it, and I pray
That thou wilt not be lonely there without me,
While I am toiling on the rugged way.

'Tis not "farewell," 'tis only "God be with
thee,"

He is with me and guides my erring feet;
I'll follow, and some day the height thou scalest
I too shall climb; in some new world we'll meet!

THE SONG OF LIFE

I sought thee in the field and in the forest,
Thou wert not there;
I sought thee by the lakeside, on the mountain,
And everywhere.

Returning to my room from vainly searching
The busy mart,
I looked within, and lo! I found thee
Close in my heart.

LOVE LYRICS

Unto the lover
She had worshipped long,
 In wondrous mood
She breathed her love in song.
 The lover smiled ;
 He neither understood,
Nor knew the rapturous thrill
 Of her he wooed.

A passing stranger
From that pregnant song
 Caught but a strain ;
He, lingering too long,
 Swooned at her feet
 In ecstasy of pain,
The rhapsody completing, —
 Yet, his love was vain.

THE SONG OF LIFE

IF death should part us
And thou first shouldst pass
Into that rest where we shall bide awhile,
Where narrow cares no longer chafe and fret,
Art sure that thou wilt watch until I come?
Art sure, dear love, that thou wilt not forget?

And when the time arrives
That we return
Again to earth, for we must surely come,
So many lessons we have not learned yet,
Art sure that thou wilt watch and wait for me?
Art sure, dear love, that thou wilt not forget?

LOVE LYRICS

WAS it in dreamy Spain
That last we met
Long centuries ago?
Or was it fated Carthage
Where I wept
To let you go
With our loved Hannibal
To fight the ancient foe?

'Twas by the sea, dear love,
For when my soul
Comes close to yours,
I see a white sea-gull
Sweep slowly down,
While dully roars
Afar the untamed deep
On crag-bound shores.

It was not in the north,
For as I looked
Into your eyes
When you came back to me,
I felt the warmth

THE SONG OF LIFE

Of southern skies
Over the Midland Sea
When daylight dies.

Perchance it was in Greece,
For in my dreams
I sometimes see
A vision of Athene,
Stern yet kind,
Smiling on thee,
And far away the hills
Of vine-clad Thessaly.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Anticipation

HEAVEN were to me a place where I may be
That which I am, in frank simplicity,
Freed from pretence and fashion's crude deceits;
And where, with growing vision, I may see
The beckoning form of what I hope to be.

THE SONG OF LIFE

A Struggling Soul

FOR love and sympathy he doth but grope
With restive eagerness, a constant hope
Of satisfaction drives him blindly on.
His thoughts are strangely innocent, his kiss
Is just a childish yearning after bliss
That passed him by in all the ages gone.

Pompous with self-complacency he seems
And anxious emulation; yet the dreams
I read within his eyes are visions faint
Of life and rapture far transcending earth, —
Such visions as precede the soul's rebirth
In one grown restless under long restraint.

Poor struggling soul, caught in thy chrysalis
Of confining threads! Would that a magic kiss
Could free those pinions quivering for their
flight;
But only thou the entangling mesh canst break
Thyself hast made, and let thy spirit take
Its faltering course from darkness unto Light.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Before the Dawn

ONE star above the tower,
A plaintive wail
Deep in the grove
From one lone nightingale,
Out on the glimmering lake
A slackened sail.

Beyond the water's gleam
A ghostly maze
Of snow-capped peaks
In dreamy, mellow haze,
And brooding over all
The moon's chill rays.

Beneath the castle tower,
Bereft of sight,
Prone on the shore,
Wrapped in the gloom of night,
A struggling human soul
Praying for light.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Ascensus

I CALL this love? Why, 'tis but selfish
passion!

What do I give to her I *love* so much?
I ask of her a life of sweet compassion,
And am not fit her garment's hem to touch.

Love giveth, asking not what it receiveth,
That is not love that seeks its own delight,
The love she feels a noble heart conceiveth,
As different from my heart as day from night.

Here on my knees in humble supplication,
I pray to God to give me light to see
The darkness in my soul, the desolation,
To help me rise to that which I must be —

If I would take the purity and sweetness
Of this young life she will so freely give,
And make of it with mine that rare completeness
That is the goal of those that truly live.

ASCENSUS

God, help me build upon a new foundation
A temple worthy of her holy shrine,
Until my soul, in its pure re-creation,
Shall blend with hers into the Soul Divine.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Luctus Beneficium

THE bitter tragedy, I would not change it,
Through tragedy we find the path of Peace;
Only when hearts are broken, hopes are shattered,
Do we from earthly fetters gain release.

Not till desire's last shred is rent asunder,
And selfish joys have paled to worthless dross,
Do we behold with free, unclouded vision
The mystic blessing of a blood-stained cross.

REAWAKENING



Reawakening

CANTO I

ONCE more I live and joy has come again !
— But a new joy, undreamed of ere I fell
From that proud height that I with cunning
built
And fancied to be paradise.

CANTO II

Rebellious against heaven and its decree
I would not yield. The treasure of my heart,
The pulsing bliss, I could not lose and live.
Fiercely did I contend.
Then came the thunderbolt and withered all.
Stunned by the blow, I helpless fell
Down from the pinnacle of my security.

CANTO III

Nothing remained ; not one poor shred
Of all I had called life ;
E'en health and hope were sped.

THE SONG OF LIFE

CANTO IV

Still I defied Thee and demanded back
All that had gone, until at last,
Like some poor mollusk on a bleak sea-shore,
Lashed by the winds, chilled by the biting blast,
Writhing I cried: "Enough! I yield to Thee.
But take my life as well. I have no will
Longer to live. My course is run,
And all my usefulness is spent."

CANTO V

Then sweetly came a voice: "Poor child!
Art thou so crushed? Thou wouldst not live?
Of all the many millions of thy kind
Dost think that half would live? And thou?
Art thou but as the great majority?"

CANTO VI

Roused by these words that reached my shattered soul,
I raised my eyes. Surprised I gazed, for lo!
A heavenly light was falling full upon me.

REAWAKENING

CANTO VII

The great majority? They have not known
The rapturous possibilities of life.
Am I as they?
To drag my fellowmen back to the mire,
From which they groping seek to rise
Into the pure effulgence of Thy Light?

CANTO VIII

Nay, I will live, and strive in God's best way
To learn to lift
Some of the heavy burden of the world;
Mindful that each pure thought and selfless act
Helps all advance
Toward that great goal to which we onward
press.

CANTO IX

God, let me cherish in my heart
No earthly idol more; or if I should,
And Thou again shouldst take what I esteem
The jewel of my soul, then will I bow
My will to Thine and say: "Great God I thank
Thee!"

THE SONG OF LIFE

The Isle of Jersey

YOU may long to be in England
When April comes again,
Or your thoughts may turn with yearning
To the skies of sunny Spain,
But I know a spot that's fairer
Both in sunshine and in rain,
'Tis the Isle of dear old Jersey
In the Channel.
Oh, the lovely Isle of Jersey,
The flower-strewn Isle of Jersey,
The sweet-scented Isle of Jersey
In the Channel!

From Corbière to Mont Orgueil,
And on to Bouley Bay,
And on again past Grève Le Lecq
Back to St. Ouen's Bay,
Stretch beetling crags and sandy shores
To gladden all the way
Round the sea-girt Isle of Jersey
In the Channel.

THE ISLE OF JERSEY

Oh, that rare old Norman chapel,
And the ruined Castle Pride
That towers in ancient sovereignty
Above the murmuring tide,
And the house in old St. Hélier's
Where they say King Charles did hide,
When he fled to quiet Jersey
In the Channel.

Those hills of purple heather,
Those fields of gorse and rose,
The dales with every blossom
That the honey-sipper knows,
And the fragrant little gardens,
Of thorn hedges rows and rows
On the leafy Isle of Jersey
In the Channel.

And the Jersey cows and Jersey French,
The quaint, old customs, too,
And walls with trailing fruit trees,
And birds of every hue,
E'en the golden-throated skylark
Sailing heavenward in the blue,
Singing songs of praise to Jersey
In the Channel.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Oh, the sunny slopes and orchards
With many a hidden glade,
The most enticing shady paths
That human foot has made,
And cabbages that grow so tall,
You can sit beneath their shade
On that strange, old Isle of Jersey
In the Channel.

There are winding lanes in Jersey
That resemble one vast bower,
And are dotted all along the way
With many a bright-eyed flower,
And there's one lane, oh, so tiny,
Just for two at twilight hour,
On that blissful Isle of Jersey
In the Channel.

You may praise the lanes of Devon,
A delight to ear and eye,
But this lane you'll find far sweeter,
For which I often sigh;
It's so narrow and so cosy,
Just a tunnel to the sky
From this lovers' Isle of Jersey
In the Channel.

THE ISLE OF JERSEY

Then go to dear, old Jersey,
This land of magic charms,
Would you seek a spot in which to rest
Safe from the world's alarms,
For Father Ocean holds secure
Within his loving arms
The peaceful Isle of Jersey
In the Channel.
Oh, the lovely Isle of Jersey,
The flower-strewn Isle of Jersey,
The sweet-scented Isle of Jersey
In the Channel!

THE SONG OF LIFE

Gibraltar to Tangier

IF you don't mind being tossed upon a very
choppy sea,
And you love the smiling springtime of the year,
Then take the little steamer with its Moorish
company
And sail out from Gibraltar to Tangier.

If you've braved the English Channel when the
sailors call it rough,
And been able to enjoy it all the way,
You will love this breezy crossing to Tangier
from the Bluff
As the dazzling rainbows glitter in the spray.

'Tis in May the sea is bluest and the saucy wave-
lets mock
And dance about the boat in merry glee,
While in majesty above you towers high the
mighty Rock,
And you bow your head in reverent ecstasy.

GIBRALTAR TO TANGIER

Cutting through the surging billows, churning
up the green-white foam,
While the waves upon the deck are dashing high,
Is a joy that knows no equal to the heart that
loves to roam
And to watch the laughing ocean kiss the sky.

The White City there before you and Gibraltar
just behind,
What earthly cares could ever cause a tear?
Would you know the rarest pleasure that we
mortals ever find —
Then — cross over from Gibraltar to Tangier.

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